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ABSTRACT

World views were postulated in the 1960s as five value orientations which are universal human existential issues to which individuals from different cultural backgrounds may have different solutions. While the Kluchhohn and Strodtbeck framework has made a significant contribution towards measuring cultural differences, it has limitations for studying within-group and between-group patterns of cultural similarities and differences. This paper presents theoretical speculations as well as research findings using worldviews as cultural and psychological variables for cross-cultural comparisons. It reviews selected worldview studies and attempts to find valid information from inconsistent comparative data via traditional scientific rationality. Its findings suggest that background factors affecting worldview are gender, religion, education, marital status, and modernity. It concludes that what can be of benefit from the research findings may not be what is present in one particular study, but the synthesis of variations of cultural patterns over time and a comparison of changing patterns across groups. The paper presents one table outlining research findings of worldview differences and one table outlining research findings of worldview differences. (Contains 31 references.) (JDM)

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Understanding Worldviews: Global and Postmodern Perspectives

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Over the past four decades, understanding worldviews of various cultures using the Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's theoretical model has become the converging professional interests of anthropology, social psychology, counseling psychology, cultural psychology, counselor-education around the world. Worldview were postulated in the 60's as five value orientations which are universal human existential issues to which individuals from different cultural backgrounds may have different solutions. They are (a) Human Nature (evil, mixed, or good); (b) Person/Nature relations (subjugation to Nature, harmony with Nature, or Mastery over Nature); (c) Social relations (Lineal, Collateral, or Individual; (d) Time sense (Past, Present, or Future); and (e) Human Activity (Being, Being-in-Becoming, Doing). Ample theoretical speculations as well as research findings using worldview as cultural and psychological variables for cross-cultural comparisons are presented in the professional literature (e.g. Baldwin & Hopkins, 1990; Carter, 1990; Cheng, O'Leary, and Page, 1995; Cheng, 1995; Katz, 1985; Mau, 1993; Sodowsky, Maguire, Johnson, Ngumba & Kohles, 1994; Trimble, 1981; Yang, J. 1998; Yang, K.S. 1982;).

Many believe that worldviews are important variables based on which counseling theories, assessment and research, and the counseling processes are derived (e.g. Carter & Helms, 1987; Carter, 1990; Ibrahim, 1987; 1991; Ibrahim and Kahn, 1987; Ivey. Ivey, and Simek-Morgan, 1997; Sue, Ivey, and Pedersen,1996; Sue & Sue, 1990; Trevino, 1996). While the Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck framework has made a significant contribution toward measuring cultural differences, it has limitations to studying within-group and between-group patterns of cultural similarities and differences (Carter, in Perdersen, 1994). From postmodernism's perspectives, worldview is the composite of personal constructs in relation to familial, societal and cultural contexts (Brotherton,1991; Ellis, 1997; Ivey, Ivey, & Simek-Morgan,1997; Perdersen, 1994; Rigazio-Digilio Ivey, & Locke, 1997). Such culture-specific emic approach of cultural understanding could mean reduction of cultural realities reflecting the limits of modernist reasoning (Pedersen, 1994,). In the present paper, the author reviews selected worldview studies in the past two decades and attempts to find valid information from inconsistent comparative data acquired via traditional scientific rationality. Discussions of issues, inferences, and alternatives follow.

Assessment of Worldview

Presented in the following are selected instruments developed by various researchers in and outside of the United States in the past two decades to assess worldviews across cultures, all based on the five themes proposed in the Kluckhohn and Strodbeck model.

The Scale to Assess World Views (SAWV; Ibrahim & Kahn, 1987). The SAWV is the most often used instrument to investigate value orientations. It is a 45-item, 5-point Likert-type scale with three subdivisions and 9 items in each of the five categories. It was reported to have split-half reliability coefficients of .95 and .96 (Irahim & Kahn, 1987); test-retest estimates ranged from .27 to

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.82 with a stability index of .67 (Sodowsky et al. in Mau, 1993).

The Intercultural Values Inventory (Kohls, Carter, & Helms, in Carter, 1990)
This inventory has 10 items for each of the 15 subscales (3 subscales for each of the 5 categories) using yes-no format with the reported reliability coefficients ranged from .54 to .79.

The Value Orientation Scale (Chung in K.S.Yang,1982)
The scale was originally in Korean but was later translated into Chinese with 45 life situations pertaining to the five categories each with 3 responses for the respondents to rank order. It was reported to have test-retest reliabilities between .62 and .86.

The Endeavoring Self and the Harmonizing Self Scales (Johnson in Kwan, et al., 1994)
Followed on Sodowsky & Taffe's suggestions to reduce the number of items and facets of the SAWV, Johnson reduced the 45-item SAWV to a 20-item, two-factor measure. The Endeavoring Self depicts cultural traits of being pragmatic, doing oriented, and trying to overcome obstacles. The Harmonizing Self depicts values of acceptance to self, others and nature as well as relationships. The two factors had an interscale correlation of .15 and coefficient alphas of .79 and .77.

Taiwanese World View Scale (J. Yang, 1998)
The TWVS was a 16- item Likert-type instrument developed by the author in her recent study, after failing to obtain a Chinese version of the SAWN. In the TWVS, each item represents one of the three subdivisions to the five categories with an additional subdivision of the human nature category: "neither good nor evil". With fair expert evaluations , the test-retest reliabilities of this scale ranged from .33 to .72.

Inadequacies of Cross-Cultural Comparisons

According to Sodowsky, et al (1994) and Ibrahim (1987) the epistemology of worldviews could be extrapolated to practice. A practitioner who is sensitive to the clients' distinctive styles could facilitate dyadic communication. Assessing and understanding the worldviews are essential to ensure compatibility of values and life perspectives (affects, cognition and behaviors) of both the counselor and the client/group being counseled. Studies of worldviews of numerous cultural groups using the above instruments have yielded, however, rather inconsistent results among themselves and contradictory from the conventional speculations of cultural variations. Presented in Table 1 is a summary of worldview research findings of selected cultural groups.

Cultural differences exist not only in the individual level but also in the group (family, work, organization, religion, etc) and cultural levels (race, ethnicity, etc), group means of comparisons in the comparative studies are thus not sufficient to represent individual and cultural means. In our increasingly diverse era, variables accounting for individual differences are too many to study and cultural differences are very difficult to verify. In addition, values may not be constant over time due to individuals' acculturation in relation to a given cultural frame of reference or external societal changes. Findings of these cross-cultural comparisons are thus not absolute but closer to what Gergen termed "relational

realities" (in Brotherton, 1991).

Up to this point in time, our understanding of certain cultural group is often confined within the parameters set by the researchers (the variables chosen for the studies, selected participants, methodologies, and explanations) and possibly is affected by the worldviews or cultural identities of the researchers. Researchers' ways of knowing affect their perceptions of cultural realities and their interpretations of differences. Could it be possible that this generation of researchers trained mostly in the empirical, rational and scientific professional backgrounds have appeared simplistic and inadequate dealing with the complexities of culture and multiple belief systems (Brotherton, 1991)? What inferences may we draw about these cultural groups with little systemic understanding? How counseling practitioners working in cross-cultural relationships may synthesize and imply such research results? What might be other alternatives for cultural understanding in the years to come?

Synthesis of Variables Mediating Worldviews

Some researchers found such background factors affecting worldviews of their participants as gender (e.g.J.Yang, J. 1998; Ihle, et al, 1996), religion (J. Yang, 1998), education & marital status (Ihle et al, 1996), and modernity (K.S.Yang,1982). Other writers offered more dynamic speculations of factors accounted for worldview variations. Examples include deeply rooted beliefs, personal identity /personal integrity development, politics/cultural contexts, behaviors in reaction to external forces in a given historical or present time, professional affiliation like counseling, modernization of developing societies, and within-group differences (Carter, 1990; Cheng et al., 1995; Sodowsky, et al, 1994; Yang, 1982;). All supporting that culture is more complex and dynamic than what the traditional value orientations could suggest (Pedersen, 1994). Could we still make inferences from the previous findings about the variables depicting the within-cultural and cross-cultural differences? The author believes that what we can benefit from these research findings may not be from what's presented in one particular study but the dynamic opportunities in synthesizing the variations longitudinally (e.g. changes of cultural pattern of certain groups overtime) and horizontally (comparisons of the change patterns across groups).

Reciprocity of Cultural Changes

Yang (1982) made inferences from his findings that Taiwanese college students at that time (future and individualistic preferences) tended to hold value orientations similar to those of White American students and that the deviation from the Chinese traditions was influenced by industrialization. His view has been supported by many other researchers (Sodowsky, 1994). Interestingly, American cultural values at that time were found to be non-western oriented (Green, in Yang, K.S. 1982). That was less individualistic and more harmonious. Yang thus made prediction that Chinese values would return to the Confucius's tradition in the postindustrial era. Almost two decades later, the author's recent findings of a national survey reflected the reciprocity of cultural change (Yang, J, 1998)

The Acculturation Processes and Value Shifts

Many agree that extra-cultural influences such as political and economical changes, cultural

adjustments, and adaptation to a new cultural context could account for the within or between group differences. A closer look at the differing patterns reveals interesting insights not discovered in each of the studies. The differences between (a) the international groups and their host cultures, (b) counselors (or counseling students) and clients, and (c) African Americans and White Americans, and (d) the endeavoring groups and the harmonious groups all suggest a common theme of change process or goal-directed living status (survival, identity and supports). This may have some association with the acculturation processes in which individuals' values are required to shift. While the cultural frameworks may vary, the psychological processes of relating to an external cultural context may be similar (e.g. international students' cultural adjustments, African Americans' striving for social justice in the dominant white American society, Taiwanese' reactions to industrialization, and clients' problem solving or personal growth). There is no evidence, however, that these transitional value shifts would lead to long term changes (Hsu, in Sodowsky, 1994; Miller, Yang & Chen, 1997; Yang,1991,1995, 1997) in value orientations.

Within Group Variations Counteracting Group Differences: Statistical Myths

The intertwined phenomena between individual uniqueness and cultural patterns the individuals subscribe to are perpetuating and often appears in the researchers' interpretation of their research results. For example, Sodowsky, et al (1994) concluded "The information about "typical" characteristics of White Americans, Chinese, Taiwanese, and African students is of limited value, especially in one-to-one or small-group interactions. A practitioner needs to be sensitive to international clients' individual world views" (p.322). One may look at the inconsistent findings and reaches an impression that maybe there is not much group difference at all then set back to the old mono- belief of individual difference. That would parallel a statistical effect called "regressing to toward the mean" as the mean of means would tend to neutralize the differences. While the power of F ratios lies in the pull of the denominator (individual differences) with a good size of samples, the struggles between the individual and group worldview could be reflective of the discrepancies between statistical observations and real life experiences. When individual differences and cultural patterns are not treated as two opposite variables separated by the empirical definitions, a third dimension is uncovered. That is the co-existence of experiences in both individual and reference group levels (and often more than one group) which construct bicultural or multicultural identities in a person.

Postmodern Perspectives: Promises and Challenges

In the postmodern era, traditional methodology of categorizing cultural uniqueness is questioned and challenged based on a social consciousness of multiple perspectives of cultural realities. In this paper, the author examined the issues and utilities of worldview studies with respects to methodology, interpretation, and statistical concepts. The author also attempted to prove that the previous research findings could be still fertile for multiple interpretation of the shifting configuration of cultural patterns and individual identities. This fluid nature of cultural realities may point to more conflicts with which the sensitive counseling practitioners are challenged (or allowed) to develop better insights and strategies dealing with individuals who experience unprepared, unpredicted or unwanted changes due to internal or external cultural transitions (Brotherton, 1991, Ponterotto, 1996)

To theorists like Kelly and Lewins, individuals are producers of their own development and

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development is contextual (in Yang, 1993). Postmodernism rejects the traditional concepts of norms, classifications of human experiences and adopts the view that culture is in the making of the individual who actively participates in his/her ever-changing world (Brotherton,1991; Ellis, 1997; Ivey, Ivey, & Simek-Morgan,1997; Perdersen, 1994; Rigazio-Digilio Ivey, & Locke, 1997). Models like The Cultural Grid and the MCT (Multicultural Counseling Theory) thus provide alternative perspectives on counseling theory, cultural identities, relational development, and counseling modalities and processes (Perdersen, 1994; 1995; Sue, Ivey, Pedersen, 1996). The authors finds the Cultural Grid model very instrumental in her conceptualization of the national survey study on Taiwanese youth culture in which adolescent behaviors, their social system variables and their subjective cultural values are matched and measured (Yang, 1998).

Challenges remain, however, in the assessment and understanding of cultural values considering person-environment interaction. In their study of collectivism and individualism in relation to cultural contexts, social behaviors and phenomenon , Traindis, Bontempo,& Villareal (1988) observed that the distance between the observer and the data determined whether the collectivism and individualism construct is one-dimensional or multidimensional. They concluded that cultural and personality differences exist in the way self and in-group are inter-related. In the human services professions, individuals are over-evaluated by what Triandis termed "objective culture" (i.e. social system variable, Pedersen, 1994) but overlooked in their "subjective culture" (values, expectations). Unlike the objective cultural variables, which can be readily observed, subjective culture can only be inferenced. Further understanding of how people interpret or construe events according their own unique view requires researchers to "cross over" the borders (Brotherton, 1991). That is crossing the borders of the empirical and the naturalistic, the modern and the traditional, the east and the west, the statistical, the researcher and the researched. Only when deconstruction of the previous cultural myths takes place, a myriad of dynamic realities of cultural values can begin to be uncovered and appreciated.

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Table 1 Research Findings of Worldview Differences

Human Nature	Good	Mixed	Evil	N
Yang, K. S. (1982)	TW			408
Carter (1990)			AA>WA	799
Mau et al. (1993)	CO>CL		CL>CO	274
Sodowsky et al. (1994)			TI, CI>WA, AA>WA	224
Cheng et al. (1995) 130	IR>CH, AM	CH>IR, AM	CH>IR, AM	
Yang, J. (1998)	TW, F>M ER>NR	TW, F>M ER>WR	M>F	2591

Person/Nature	Subjugation	Harmony	Mastery
Yang, K. S. (1982)		TW	
Carter (1990)	AA>WA		
Mau et al. (1993)	CL>CO	M>F	
Sodowsky et al. (1994)	TI, CI>WA		
Cheng et al.(1995)	CH> AM		
Yang, J. (1998)	TW		

Social Relations	Lineality	Collaterality	Individualism
Yang, K. S. (1982)		TW, HM	
Carter (1990)	AA>WA	WA>AA	WA>AA
Mau et al. (1993)	CL>CO	CL>CO	M>F
Sodowsky et al (1994)	TI, CI>WA TI,AA>CI	TI, CI>WA	WA, CI>TI
Cheng et al. (1995)	CH>IR, AM AM>IR		CH>IR, AM
Yang, J. (1998)	TW	M>F	

Time Orientation	Past	Present	Future
Yang, K. S. (1982)	TW, F>M	TW, M>F	
Carter (1990)	AA>WA		
Mau, et al. (1993)	CL>CO		
Sodowsky et al. (1994)	AA>WA, CI	TI, CI>WA	
Cheng et al. (1995)	CH>IR, AM>IR	CH,IR>CH?	CH>IR, AM
Yang, J. (1998)	TW	M>F	

Activity	Being	Being-in-Becoming	Doing
Yang, K. S. (1982)	TW, LM	M>F	
Carter (1990)	WA>AA	AA>WA	
Mau (1993)	F>M		
Sodowsky et al (1994)		TI, CI>WA	

To be continued

Table 1 Continued

	Activity	Being	Being-in-Becoming	Doing
Cheng (1995)		F>M	CH>IR	
Yang, J. (1998)	F>M	TW	M>F	

	The Endeavoring Self	The Harmonizing Self	N
Ihle, et al (1996)	WW>WACL, CIWS>WAWCO TWS>CWS WAWCL>WAWCO CWS>WAWCO	WAWCO WAWCO>CWS	
Kwan, et al (1994)	CI,TI>HKI		

AA: African Americans AM: Americans WA: White Americans
CH: Chinese TW: Taiwanese IR: Irish
CO: Counselor CL: Clients M: Male
F: Female ER: Eastern Religions WR: Western Religions
NR: No Religions LM: Low Modernization HM: High Modernization
CI: Chinese Int'l Students TI: Taiwanese Int'l Students HKI: Hong Kong Int'Students
WW: White American Women CWS: Chinese Woman Students WACL: White American Clients CIWAS: Chinese Woman Students WAWCO: White American Woman Counselor
TWS: Taiwan Woman Students